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PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE

Rt. Rev. James Vincent Cleary, S.T.D.,

BISHOP OF KINGSTON,

TO THE REV. CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE,

ON

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

AND

SCOTT'S "MARMION,"

*Being a Summary of Three Sermons Preached by him in
St. Mary's Cathedral on the 1st, 2nd and
5th of November, 1882.*

KINGSTON, ONT. :

PRINTED AT THE BRITISH WHIG OFFICE, KING STREET EAST.

1882.

*Catholic Church, Diocese of Kingston, Ont.
Bishop, 1870-1889 (Cleary)*

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James Vincent Cleary, S.T.D.,

*By the Grace of God and favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop
of Kingston, to the Rev. Clergy of his Diocese.*

DEAR REV. FATHERS :

The preservation of Ireland's faith throughout three centuries of the direst persecution the world has ever witnessed was a miracle of God's right hand. Human causes are utterly inadequate to explain it. Of all the multitudinous forms of penal legislation to which Catholic Ireland was subjected, the most odious and most trying is that which aimed at enslaving the mind and starving out its life by the persistent denial of the food of intelligence, without which it cannot live, its faculties must remain undeveloped, it is dwarfed, enfeebled, brutified. This diabolical system of persecution for conscience sake was invented, 1500 years ago, by the wicked Emperor, Julian the Apostate, who, seeing that the Bishops and Apologists of the Church were the most learned men of their age, issued an edict forbidding Catholic schools to teach Grammar, Rhetoric or Philosophy, that is to say, the branches of education corresponding to the Arts curriculum in our modern Universities ; and by a subsequent decree prohibited the study of the classic authors of Greece and Rome in the Catholic schools, because, as he loved to say derisively, " Luke's Greek is good enough for the Nazareans." Ammianus Marcellinus, the Pagan panegyrist of this bad Emperor, does not hesitate to qualify this anti-educational policy as a most base and unjust contrivance of tyranny. Nevertheless, the oppressors of Ireland, in the hey-day of their boasted enlightenment, were not ashamed to renew and intensify these methods of religious persecution. Need you be told how the grand institutions of learning, which adorned the Holy Isle and had been for ages the centre of attraction for the youth of many countries who thirsted after the fountains of sacred and profane knowledge, were seized, plundered, dismantled in the name of religious liberty, their students, numbering several thousands

in some colleges, were dispersed at the point of the sword, their professors exiled or massacred, and all education thenceforth interdicted to the children of Catholic Ireland.

Anti-Educational Penal Laws in Ireland.

In the country that had sent forth its learned sons, Clement and John, at the request of Charlemagne, in the eighth century, to found the first two universities in the world, those of Paris and Pavia, and had supplied good King Alfred with counsellors in his projects for the promotion of learning in England, a Catholic parent had no alternative, if he wished to live and die in the faith of his fathers, but to allow his lovely boy, his bright-eyed, talented boy, grow up in besotting ignorance, his mind stunted, his natural cravings for knowledge unsatiated, and every high and honorable career closed against him all the days of his life. There was no university, no college, no high school, no grammar school, no school of any kind open for Catholics, or tolerated in any part of the island for Catholic children's education in conformity with their faith. The Catholic schoolmaster was hunted down as a wild beast, and a price was set upon his head, the same as upon the head of a wolf. Good men had found means indeed to establish numerous bourses for Irish boys in France, Spain, Italy, Austria and the Netherlands; but a series of Acts of Parliament forbade any parent to send his child across the sea for education under pain of fine, imprisonment and, eventually, of death. Although the Endowed schools, provided by the piety of our Catholic forefathers for the Catholic training of Irish youth, had been transferred to the stranger professing an alien creed, a Catholic boy would have been gladly welcomed to their halls, and might have passed thence to Trinity College, to prepare himself for the higher walks of professional and civil life, were he only to declare himself a Protestant. But father and son and grandson, and ten generations of Irishmen in succession, preferred ignorance with soul-saving faith to learning purchased by the forfeiture of the hope of heaven. It was not in vain they had imbibed at their mothers' breasts the love of God, the Virgin and St. Patrick. In their boyhood they had been taught by parent and priest the divine maxim, "what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Mark 8c. 28v.) And amidst the dreariness of their Irish firesides, throughout the long night of persecution, parent and child,

brother and sister, often cheered each other by the soul-sustaining words of the good Tobias in the days of the Captivity, "We are the children of saints, and we expect that life which God shall give to those who never change their faith from him." (Tobias 2c. 18v.)

Many and various were the causes that led to the gradual relaxation of those anti-educational laws. One thing is certain, not the smallest link in the chain of Catholic servitude was loosened by English bigotry in acknowledgment of the claims of justice between man and man or equality of rights before the law, much less through love of Christian brotherhood or generosity towards the vanquished. Considerations such as these, in respect of Catholic rights and interests, never reach the English Protestant mind, except through the agency of fear infused into Cabinets by loud and earnest agitation or the proximate danger of some Imperial calamity. Unhappily for Ireland, and for England also, this lesson is too plainly written in the pages of their international record. It was not till England had suffered grave humiliations and found herself surrounded by unwonted dangers a hundred years ago, that she bethought herself of the necessity of conciliating Irish Catholics by conceding the minimum of mitigation of her penal atrocities. Her army under Cornwallis had just surrendered in America. France and Spain were actually engaged with her in war. Their fleets were coursing freely through the British Channel. The Irish volunteers, many thousands of whom were Catholics, had formed into brigades, and were unopposed by British regiments in Ireland. At this conjuncture it was, that the very cautious and modest bill introduced by Mr. Gardiner in the British House of Commons in 1771, asking, among other small favors, that liberty be given to Irish Catholics to educate their children, after having been several times defeated, was brought forward again on the 15th February, 1772, the day of the Convention of the Volunteers in Dungannon and the adoption by them of Grattan's resolution in support of Catholic rights. Then, and only then, the bill received favorable consideration and was passed into law.

System of Primary Education in Ireland.

At first the privilege was conceded to Catholics of opening private schools for instruction in the principles of Christian morality and the rudiments of secular knowledge, on condition of a permit being procured from the local Protestant bishop's

Consistorial Court. We have had in our hand the document whereby the nuns of the Presentation Order, at their first introduction into the city of Waterford for the gratuitous education of the female poor in 1798, were authorized by the Protestant Bishop to conduct a school, two Catholic clergymen and a Catholic merchant having been required previously to give bail for their good behaviour. By the same document all other persons were inhibited from teaching within the city, "in pain of the law and contempt thereof." In view of these humiliating restrictions, how thankful should not we be to Almighty God for the change He has wrought in the spirit of the age and the comparative freedom enjoyed by our brethren in the old land and ourselves in this country of our adoption. Let us pray that His Divine Spirit may continue to operate upon society for the more copious diffusion amongst all classes of the principles and sentiments of true liberty and of natural and civil right, entitling every citizen to his just share of the undivided patrimony of the family of freemen.

The Catholic Relief Bill having been passed in the year 1829—though not until the Duke of Wellington had declared that its rejection would result in a civil war—it was fairly expected that the right of citizenship would entail the right of free education to the emancipated children of Ireland. The rich Protestant minority had ample means of giving their sons the best literary and scientific education in Trinity College, the most wealthy University in the world, and in the Endowed schools, founded by pious Catholics in bygone days, but now converted by Government to Protestant uses. Some system of popular education should of necessity be established by Government for the great mass of the people, whose impoverished condition left them helplessly at the mercy of their English rulers. Should not they be educated in accordance with the doctrine and discipline of their religion, that its holy influence might season and sanctify their intellectual food and mould their moral nature in harmony with the supernatural, purifying, refining, and elevating its character, its aims, its hopes, its tastes and aspirations? If Protestants had Protestant teaching in all its grades provided for them by the State, why not Catholics—the poor, despoiled Catholics—have Catholic teaching provided for them at least in the elementary grade? But it must not be. Traditional bigotry could not tolerate it. The sole education permissible to the Catholic poor man's child under the

National School system, about to be provided by Parliament, shall be based on the undenominational principle, and shall be hampered by a variety of vexatious restrictions and suspicious conditions. No dogma, no discipline, no book, no symbol, in the least degree tainted with Catholicity, shall be tolerated in the school during school hours. Even the sacred sign of redemption must not be seen within the school or upon its exterior, lest, it was pretended, the Protestant children should be offended, although there are 2,500 National schools in Ireland, attended by nearly half a million Catholic children, in which no Protestant child has ever, and probably none shall ever, set foot. Moreover, the entire working of the system shall be entrusted to a Board of Commissioners, ten in number, seven of them Protestants and only three Catholics, for the mental and moral training of nearly 900,000 Catholic boys and girls, varying from four to fourteen or fifteen years of age. No wonder that suspicion was aroused against the system in all quarters. The Bishops, desirous to maintain their strength in unity, referred the question of its acceptance or rejection to the Holy See, "from which," as St. Cyprian declared 1600 years ago, "sacerdotal unity is derived." (Ep. 55 *ad Cornel*). After two years' deliberation the Sovereign Pontiff decided to leave every bishop to his own discretion as to the fitness of the system for its safe practical working in his diocese, laying the gravest obligation upon his conscience to keep jealous watch over the books to be used in the schools and the observance of certain restrictions upon the office of teachers, because on these two points would chiefly depend the safety or danger of the National System in its relation to religion. In its practical working, however, it was found that, with the connivance of the Commissioners, the grossest injustice was in many parts, especially in Ulster, done to the poor Catholic children, whose poverty did not enable them to erect schools of their own, and who were, therefore, compelled to attend the mixed schools under Protestant patrons and teachers. Parliamentary investigations revealed the shameful fact that Godly Protestant teachers availed themselves of their position to enforce upon the poor Catholic children their Protestant bible and their own peculiar interpretations thereof. The startling disclosure is made by Archbishop Whately's daughter, in her father's biography, that he, who had been one of the Commissioners,—in fact the very soul of the Board,—had confessed (in his own handwriting,

authenticated by his daughter) that his whole aim and object in the working of the National System of education was "to undermine the vast fabric of Popery in Ireland;" and he adds that, whilst aiming at this end, and fearing to avow it, he was "like a man fighting with one hand, and that his best one, tied behind his back." The result of these exposures has been a complete stoppage to the system of proselytism in the schools, and the practical conversion of what is legally termed the united secular and separate religious education into thoroughly denominational teaching in most parts of the country. Thus far the action of priests and people with their Bishops, and the unity of the Bishops with the Pope, have saved the poor Catholics of Ireland from the danger of perversion in the primary schools.

Higher Education in Ireland.

The higher education of the Catholic people formed no part of the first Governmental project of national education in Ireland; but Archbishop McHale and others foretold from the beginning that, if the Government should get hold of the elementary education of Catholic children, the next step would be to establish colleges without the guarantees against proselytism which had of necessity been granted in the primary schools. The prophecy was verified. The Queen's University, consisting of three colleges richly endowed, and offering to Catholic youth tempting bribes in the form of scholarships and prizes, were established on the principle of Godless education, no guarantee whatever being given to Catholic parents that the text books might not be irreligious or immoral, or that the professors might not be (what some of them avowed themselves to be) dogmatic infidels. This system was likewise referred to Rome, and was condemned as "intrinsically dangerous to faith and morals." The Bishops of Ireland were strictly forbidden to take any part in the formation or working of those Godless institutions, and priests were ordered to accept no office, educational or disciplinary, in them. The result is their absolute failure, despite the hundreds of thousands of pounds expended upon the buildings and the immense annual revenues by which they are fed from taxes of Catholics and Protestants alike. The next project of the Government for undermining the Catholic faith of Ireland was the creation and endowment of Model schools, for classical and scientific teaching, in the cities and large towns, on

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the same principle of peremptory denial to Bishops and parents of all right and title to examine the character of the text-books or to have a voice in the election or dismissal of teachers. These institutions were accordingly condemned by the Holy See for the same reasons that led to the condemnation of the Queen's colleges: and, like the fig-tree cursed by the Saviour, (Mark 11 ch.) they have withered before the eyes of mankind. The elegance of the buildings, erected at a cost of three hundred thousand pounds sterling, and the superior collegiate apparatus and staff of teachers provided for them at an annual expense of twenty-eight thousand pounds, have failed to tempt Catholic parents to the violation of the Episcopal interdict laid upon them in every Diocese, conformably to the instructions of the Holy See. This is the glorious faith of Ireland, defending its unsullied purity against the artifices of its traditional foe. It is the standard of God upheld against the standard of the world. It is the unity of people with priest, of priest with Bishop, of Bishops with Christ's Vicar, effectually resisting alike the anti-educational policy of the past and the more dangerous policy of anti-Catholic education in the present "for the sake of the hope of Israel" (Acts 28c. 20v.) Let us take to heart the lesson of Ireland's inextinguishable faith, her fervent piety, her lofty wisdom, her dauntless courage, always remembering the admonition of the prophet, "Look to the rock whence you are hewn," (Isaias 51c. 1v.), for "we are the children of saints, and we expect that life which God shall give to those who never change their faith from him." (Tobias 2c., 18).

Reasons of their Condemnation.

It is of the utmost importance, dear Revd. Fathers, that you keep your attention fixed upon the radical difference between the system of Primary education, tolerated by the Church in Ireland, and the systems of the Queen's University and Model Schools, condemned by the Supreme Pontiff and the Irish Bishops. The former concedes to the divinely-appointed guardians of faith and morals the right of management, involving the right of election and dismissal of teachers, wherever the schoolhouse is Catholic property; and in those parts of the country, where Catholics are few, and are accordingly necessitated to attend schools under Protestant management, satisfactory guarantees against proselytism are afforded by the rules of the Board and the right of visitation

regularly exercised by the priest. The books used in these schools have moreover been compiled with cautious regard to the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church and the religious feelings of her children, this right being assured by the law, both in its letter and its spirit. On the other hand, the charters of the Queen's Colleges and the Model School expressly exclude all interference with their management on the part of the Church's pastors or the children's parents. The right of election and dismissal of teachers, the censorship of the books, and the entire regulation of the course of instruction, are vested exclusively in the University Senate for the Queen's Colleges and in the Board of Commissioners for the Model Schools. Neither priest nor bishop has the right of visitation or censorship, nor control of any kind whatsoever. Hence the condemnation of the latter and the toleration of the former system of education.

In what does the Ontario System differ from the Systems Condemned in Ireland?

Such being the case, we are led naturally to investigate the difference between our systems of higher education in Ontario and those reprobated by the Church in Ireland. The principle of their constitution seems to be one and the same. Their statutes do not, so far as we know, exhibit any essential difference. Why, then, do we tolerate here what the Holy See forbids the bishops to tolerate in Ireland? For our part, we cannot explain it otherwise than by reference to the spirit that governs their practical working. In Canada the spirit of peace happily prevails among the influential men of the various religious bodies. The Government, whether Liberal or Conservative, exhibits a disposition to deal, in the main, fairly between Catholics and Protestants, to recognize equal rights, and in transactions affecting religious interests to avoid all needless irritation and all appearance of partiality for one denomination to the prejudice of another. There is no traditional hostility to the Catholic religion in Canada, nor any hereditary claims of Protestant ascendancy supplying pretext for unfair advantage. There has been no confiscation of the land here, nor any agrarian war between the despoilers and the despoiled, deepening in strife from generation to generation, and constantly evoking new penal enactments for the defence of the territorial and religious supremacy of the former and

the heavier oppression of the latter. Public opinion among the masses and public policy on the part of the rulers are, moreover, largely affected by the balance of political power in the Provinces, the dominant Catholicity of the Lower Province countervailing the dominant Protestantism of the Upper, whence the minority in Ontario may, with good show of reason, demand the same social and religious consideration that is accorded to the minority in Quebec. The great variety of races likewise contributes to the general peace in this country by rendering sectarian combinations more difficult, the intermixture of nationalities in the settlement being admonitive of their dependence on one another and the manifest advantage of their mutual forbearance for the quiet ordering of life. These are among the causes that operate in Canadian society favorably to peace, and justify our sense of security against any formidable combination for the purpose of anti-Catholic aggression. It is true, the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes of Ontario do not supply Catholic education. They are not what the Church desires for her children. They do not accord with her spirit. Their non-Catholic character renders them ineffective for the moral and spiritual training of youth. They inform the intellect, but they do not fashion the man, much less the woman, in the perfect mould which the constant influence of religious teaching, combined with the secular, alone imparts; for it is only the Divine stamp impressed upon the mind and heart of man, "prone to evil from his youth," (Gen. 8c. 21,) that shapes the thought, the judgment, the fancy, the tastes and principles and motives of conduct in the fitness of the life of the children of God, destined for something better and more enduring than the best chances of earthly prosperity. In other respects also our Ontario system is defective, and worse than defective. They are not without their dangers. But we are not devoid of hope that whatever grievances we at present endure shall in due time be taken into high consideration and honestly remedied. Our confidence rests upon the social basis. We have no grave apprehension that the little ones of our flock shall be robbed of their faith or undermined in their morals by their acceptance of instruction in the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes of Ontario. It is not by the statutes written on parchment, but by the practical working of the system, that the judgment of the Hierarchy is determined; and

the liberty hitherto allowed to Catholic parents to send their children to those educational centres is proof before the world of the Bishops' belief that the system is, on the whole, free from any grave danger that would render it intolerable. Were things otherwise—were the conditions of civil society and the spirit of governmental action in Ontario the same as in England with respect to Catholicity, then the same well-founded suspicion of contemplated proselytism and the same apprehensions regarding the operation and development of the systems of high education in Ireland, referred to by the Popes in their condemnation of them, should, it seems to Us, attach to the systems of Ontario likewise, and call for their condemnation by the same Sovereign authority. The Church cannot uphold in one country what she condemns in another, the conditions, theoretical and practical, being the same in both. If, therefore, the peace we have hitherto enjoyed should be rudely broken, and the confidence of the Chief Pastors be forfeited by acts of aggression on Catholic faith or discipline, whether by the sanction of bad school-books or the offensive action of anti-Catholic teachers, the question for the Bishops then would be: Should they not imitate the example set them by their Irish brethren and ask the Holy See to decide whether the systems of Higher Education in Ontario are not "intrinsically dangerous to faith and morals?" It must be obvious to every one that the result of an affirmative decision would be the compulsory withdrawal of our children from those institutions; and thenceforth Ontario would resound with the tumult of war and the fierce battle-cries of creeds and races.

Cause of Recent Uneasiness.

A wave of anxiety has recently passed over the public mind by reason of the extremely bitter anti-Catholic tone of a series of editorial articles in a Toronto Journal which is supposed to reflect the sentiments of the great Conservative party in the Dominion. We must here premise that since our advent to Canada We have carefully abstained from interference by word or act with political affairs. We have known no party but our own people and their spiritual interests. We confess, however, that we entertain the highest respect for the Conservative party, and from individual members within it we have received nothing but courtesy and kindness, impressing us with the conviction that their principles and high social character guarantee their freedom from all

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desire to wilfully trespass upon the religious rights of the Catholic people, or offend their feelings by words of insult. What, then, was Our surprise upon reading in the paper, supposed to be their organ, editorial articles abounding with insult and the vilest ribaldry against the highest ecclesiastical dignitary in the province. And what for? Because, forsooth, His Grace had dared to exercise the first and most important duty of his office by respectfully expostulating with the Minister of Education against the introduction into the schools frequented by Catholic children of a book extremely offensive to the Catholic religion, its discipline and conventual institutions. On this ground he has been attacked as an intermeddler and a dictator, and vituperation in all forms has been heaped upon him. His Grace's venerable age, his exalted place in the Church, his learning, his piety, his great public services, his representative character, were no safeguard against obloquy and derision the moment he appeared as a defender of his children's innocence. Here is war proclaimed against a first principle of the Catholic religion, against a paramount right of the Episcopate, a right which no bishop can renounce under any threat or any penalty. The chief pastor must guard his flock against being seduced into poisonous pastures, and, above all, the little ones of the fold must have their innocence protected by the special vigilance of him to whose care they have been entrusted by the Pastor of Pastors.

The Author of "Marmion."

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Consider the character of the book entitled "Marmion," to which objection has been taken. We may be permitted to state at the outset that We do not regard Sir Walter Scott as an enemy of Catholicity. Scott did not profess religious zeal in any form. His religion was what may be called a political religion—he followed the views of his party. His writings were directed chiefly to the illustration of the manners of society, and had regard generally to the middle ages, the times of feudalism and chivalry. If "Marmion" offends our Catholic feelings, we readily condone the offence, because of the many beautiful pictures of Catholic life, animated by lofty Catholic inspiration, and developing in the formation of noble characters, with which the author's elegant writings abound. "Marmion" was not composed by him with any special spite against us; but the traditional prejudices of

English society, carefully fostered by the holders of the Abbey lands which Henry VIII. had confiscated on pretence of immoral practices among the holy inmates, had thoroughly imbuéd the mind of the poet ; and the wonder is that Scott, living in the midst of this fog of English prejudice, and straitened by financial difficulties, did not indulge more frequently in that species of writing calculated to gratify the morbid taste of anti-Catholic society in England ninety years ago.

Is "Marmion" Offensive to Catholics ?

It has been said, and repeated *ad nauseam*, that this poem is not of its nature "offensive" to Catholics. We must claim the right to doubt the sincerity of the gentlemen, reverend and lay, who put forth this opinion. Remember always that the Author has explicitly declared the poem to be an illustration of the manner of life in the early part of the 16th century. In his Preface to the work he writes as follows :—
 "The design of the author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his story, and to prepare them for *the manners of the age in which it is laid*. . . .
 "An attempt to *pain* the manners of the feudal times will not be "unacceptable to the public." Is it not, therefore, exceedingly "offensive" to represent to the youth of this Province Catholic institutions of superior sanctity, and religious men and women under manifold forms of abominable vice ? Is not the typical priest—the local pastor—"offensively" represented as more rude and profane than any trooper in his habits of swearing, stabbing and brawling ? Is Catholic feeling not justly "offended" and grievously hurt by the picture of a friar, the man of humility and prayer and self-imposed mortification, going about as a sot and buffoon through towns and castles and towers, wheresoever the wine and ale flowed freely, and violating the sacred rights of hospitality by the most atrocious of all crimes, the foul dishonouring of his host's wife ? Are not our nuns, the virgins espoused to Jesus Christ in poverty, chastity and obedience, "offensively" and untruly and most painfully typified in the trio selected for portraiture of their Order, of whom one indeed is a virtuous nun, but the second is a love-lorn maiden, wearing the holy habit of religion, whilst her heart and mind are abroad in the world ; and the third is a creature of sin, a perjured impure. Is it not an "offensive" and shockingly untrue and indecent picture of Catholic life that is set before the minds of pure

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boys and girls, both Catholic and Protestant, in Canada, when the whole plot of the poem is an impure and sacrilegious intrigue between a voluptuous young chieftan and a consecrated nun, resulting in this weak creature's abandonment of herself to his lust, her flight from the convent, her companionship with him for three years in this loathsome turpitude of life, her sex all the while disguised by her dressing in male attire? Is it not "offensive" to our dearest religious feelings to have the convents, the homes of holiness, represented as places where murder was practised in dungeons 100 feet below the surface of the earth., into which neither light nor air could enter? Are we to take no "offence" for abbots of the great Benedictine monasteries that have done such wonderful things for civilization, for the conversion of the pagan, and the sanctification of Christian society, whose life-long labors in the intervals of prayer were devoted to the transcription and preservation of the glorious classic writings of ancient Greece and Rome—that these self-sacrificing men, these benefactors of society, are represented as the natural foes of mankind, fired with spite and envy, and driven by despair into the cloister, or again as men whose early life was marked by some foul crime and were drawn by remorse of conscience to the penitential life of the convent? We would respectfully ask those gentlemen who proclaim "Marmion" inoffensive as a school-book, what they would think of the guardians of education in the province of Quebec appointing as a text book for the high schools and university Dryden's poem of "The Hind and the Panther," or Cobbett's "History of the Reformation?" Or, to make the case more parallel, suppose that instead of the scene of the plot being laid in the Middle Ages, it were laid in the 16th century, and, for precision's sake, in the year 1525; that it was not in northern England but in Germany, not a fiction of the poet's brain but an incontrovertible historical fact, and that the two principal characters portrayed were not Marmion and Constance, but Martin and Catharine, would any Protestant gentleman, lay or cleric, patiently listen to a Catholic clergyman solemnly assuring his congregation that it was exactly the book to be placed in the hands of the male and female children of Canada?

The Question of "Marmion's" Immorality.

It has been asked, "Is 'Marmion' immoral? We answer, No, not in intent. Is it of its nature likely to awaken impure

emotions in the readers' minds? No, if the reader be a man of educated feeling and well-balanced judgment and steady, virtuous disposition. But for boys and girls, arrived at the critical period of adolescence, when nature has awakened a new sense within them, and they have begun to recognize an order in society and a relation between the two great classes in human life, hitherto concealed by a wise Providence, and as yet their feelings and ideas have not been definitely brought under the control of self-denial and the chastening of the imagination, will any parent say that the picture of the turpitude of life represented in *Marmion* and *Constance* is proper to be set before them for close continual study and analysis of every sentence, line and word? "I made a covenant with my eyes," said holy Job, "that I would not so much as think upon a virgin." (Job 31c.) St. Paul would have "the unmarried woman and the virgin be holy both in body and spirit." (1 Cor. 7c. 34v.) The Saviour of mankind has, moreover, classified "evil thoughts" with murder, adultery and fornication, and of them He said, "These are the things that defile a man." (Matt. 15c.) How shall we reconcile this exalted doctrine of chaste restraint upon the mind and imagination, so dear to the heart of the Catholic Church, with the severe critical study by our boys and girls of such pictures as "*Marmion*" draws of the "gentle paramour" in page's garb; of the hurried flight of the surprised adulterer; of Lord Heron at the head of his banquet-table jesting with lascivious reference to the page's sex, and his noble guest retorting with scornful reproach of cuckoldom; of James in his camp indulging royal amours, and the "wily Lady," of siren charms, bewitching him with harp and song, with laugh and blush and "pretty oath" in presence of his courtiers?

One needs not to be a very profound moralist to know what a powerful support to virtue in youth is the atmosphere of holiness encompassing daily life. The conviction that virtue reigns supreme all round in stern, exacting reality, exercises a mighty influence for the steadying of the undisciplined mind of the gay stripling with downy cheek. Shall Canadian youth be taught to forfeit this conviction and look upon all classes of society with suspicion of inner vice being concealed under the outward forms of conventional reserve? For, if the nun and friar be impure, and the military chief be impure, and the Lord's Lady too, and the King in camp and court be impure, may not the scanning student of "*Marmion*" say to

himself, as he surveys the drawing-room, "Perhaps here also is plotted some impure intrigue?" It is unquestionably dangerous to inure the boyish mind to general suspicion of evil.

Concerning this particular vice, the Apostle St. Paul admonishes all Christians, old and young, "Let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. 5c. 3v.) What shall become of this rule in Canada, if the poem of which We complain, be a subject for public reading and private study with a view to examination? The school-book will be a common topic of conversation among the class-mates: for if the mind be full, the mouth must speak. We repeat that, how innocuous soever this book may be to a man matured in virtue, it is decidedly injurious to youth, especially if it be used as a class-book and made the subject of examination for honors and matriculation. The impressions made upon the mind by class-books under these circumstances are, we all know it, absolutely ineffaceable. It does not require any sensuous coloring of sin by the pen of fancy to give an immoral tendency to a poem placed in the hands of youth for daily study. The danger is perhaps all the greater by reason of the attractive dress in which vice is disguised, the glamour of romance and chivalry surrounding the infamous characters it portrays, the picture of beauty, elegance of form, "matchless constancy" and elevation of spirit, with which the fallen female, the woman of sin, is presented to the unsteady and easily fascinated youthful mind.

Is "Marmion" Unjust?

To offer to the public of Canada the poem "Marmion" as a faithful delineation of Catholic life in our conventional institutions, whether in the Middle Ages or any age, would be the foulest of historical injustices ever perpetrated upon the Church of the Crucified. The Pagan satirists upheld the gods of the empire, and acquired the power of evoking the demon of persecution at will, by calumniating the Christian worshippers, whom they boldly charged with feasting upon the flesh of slaughtered infants and committing shameful impurities in their religious assemblies. The sacrilegious intrigues and dungeon-scenes of "Marmion" are not very dissimilar in their nature, their origin and their purpose. Not that Sir Walter Scott invented them. He treats them as portions of the great Protestant Tradition of England, the truth or falsehood of which he was not concerned to investigate, whilst its supreme

influence in social and political circles, no less than its exclusive possession of the richest treasures of classic British literature, overcame his better instincts and led him to offer occasional sacrifice to the popular idol. The following extract from the writings of England's greatest scholar and truest of critics, John Henry Cardinal Newman, forcibly illustrates the position :—

“Verse and prose, grave and gay, the scientific and the practical, history and fable, all is animated spontaneously, or imperiously subdued, by the spirit of Henry and Elizabeth. I say “imperiously subdued,” because the Tradition of Protestantism is strong enough, not only to recommend, but to force, its reception on each successive generation of authors. It compels when it cannot persuade. There is Alexander Pope, a Catholic, and who would discover it from the run of his poems? There is Samuel Johnson, born a Protestant, yearning for the Catholic Church, and bursting out into fitful defences of portions of her doctrine and discipline, yet professing to the last that very Protestantism which could neither command his affections nor cure his infirmities. And, in our own time, there was Walter Scott, ashamed of his own Catholic tendencies, and cowering before the jealous frown of the tyrant Tradition. There was Wordsworth, obliged to do penance for Catholic sonnets by anti-Catholic compliments to them. Scott, forsooth, must plead antiquarianism in extenuation of his prevarication. Wordsworth must plead Pantheism; and Burke, again, must plead political necessity. Liberalism, scepticism, infidelity, these must be venial errors, under plea of which a writer escapes reprobation for the enormity of feeling tenderly towards the religion of his fathers, and of his neighbours around him.”—(Newman's “Present Position of Catholics in England,” Lecture II.)

That human nature may have sometimes, throughout the 1800 years of the Church's existence, yielded to the impulse of passion in not a few of her elect children from amongst the hundred millions consecrated by her to God under religious vows, is quite possible, it is more than probable. That regenerated man may fall from grace is a dogma of Catholicity, whose denial is heresy. That the Church of Jesus Christ shall consist of good men and bad, of sinners and saints, of those who shall be crowned with benediction and those who shall be condemned to the torments of hell on the Day of General Judgment, is also a dogma of Catholic faith.

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written in lines of noon-day distinctness in every page of the New Testament. But the "Marmion" story of "Bloody Rome" and "Priests' cruelty" and the "Vault of Penitence excluding air and light" and "living tombs" underneath the convents: of the cowed assassin skilled in the use of "bowl and knife": of the Benedictine Abbot, on whose brow

"Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown"

holding "Council of life and death in secret aisle beneath."

"To speak the Chapter's doom"

"On those the wall was to enclose"

"Alive, within the tomb":

of the "haggard monks," the church's "chosen executioners, vassals of her will" standing motionless, torch in hand,

"And building tools in order laid,"

beside the fatal niche's grisly door—this mass of ghastly horrors, associated with the unchastity of Constance de Beverley, and the farrago of silly superstitions scoffingly typifying the religious mind—the whole plot of the story and all its vicious embellishment, are indeed a true expression of England's cherished Tradition of Prejudice, but, at the same time, a cruel, heartless libel upon the Monastic life of the favored children of the Church of God.

The constitution of our religious Orders is the brotherhood of peace and holiness and Gospel Counsel and charity towards God and man. If discipline must be upheld in the Cloister, and faults expiated, the imposition of penance must be tempered by mercy and ordained to the correction of the delinquent, not to his destruction. You will search in vain through the whole code, ancient and modern, of ecclesiastical law for the institution of monastic tribunals empowered to inflict the death-penalty. On the contrary, dear Rev. Fathers, as you well know, the Catholic Church has, from the remotest ages, repelled from her Sanctuary the spiller of blood; not alone the murderer, but every man who has participated in the taking of human life, albeit in strict accord with the established rules of public justice, be he accuser or witness or executioner, ermined judge upon the bench or Crown counsel pleading for the protection of society. And yet the aged Benedictine Abbot, "the Saint of Lindisfarne," is, we are told, fitly represented to Canadian youth in solemn judicial character

"In long black dress, on seat of stone,"

consigning to death in most barbarous form two of his subjects by virtue of "the Statutes of his Order strict" laid open before him on an "iron table!" We may smile at the poetic elegance of the "iron table" and the "seat of stone"; but we should be more than men, or very much less, were our souls not fired with indignation at the revolting picture of exalted Christian sanctity transformed into worse than Pagan vice, and the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, the favorite virtues of the "Word made flesh," personified in living characters unutterably odious. Place this poem in the hands of youth as a subject of study for academic honors, to be read, ruminated, digested and assimilated to their vital thought; what other effect can it have than to create an early horror of the cloistered religious life fashioned upon the divine model of the Virginal association of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the first Christian Convent, the holy home of Nazareth? Is not this unjust to the Church? 's it not unjust to Catholic youth? Oh! yes; but this is precisely the end to which the foul calumnation of the religious Orders was directed, not by the prevaricating author of "Marmion," but by the rapacious King who procured scurrilous libels, indecent pictures and suborned testimony of paid accusers to be scattered among the English people from end to end of the island, impressing them effectually with the ideas which for three centuries have been embodied in the Tradition of Prejudice against Catholicity. It well became Henry the Eighth's "innocence of hand and cleanness of heart" to charge the chaste spones of Christ with unchastity, and to impute deeds of nameless viciousness to the erudite Benedictines, the mortified Trappists, the soul-stirring Dominican Preachers of the olden Gospel, the Franciscan devotees of poverty, the zealous Augustinian Missionaries, the pious Carmelite guardians of the Virgin's shrines, and all other religious men whose prayers and good works helped to save England from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of that impure, wife-murdering despot. If the monasteries were to be plundered, policy required that they should first be defamed. Hence Tom Cromwell's Court of Inquisition. If the good English people were to be gained over to belief in the evil-doing of monks and nuns, they must be coaxed by the promise of exemption from taxes and the grant of Abbey lands to influential families. Let Us here quote an historian than whom none has ever been

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more hostile or more unscrupulous in employing his pungent pen against the Holy Catholic Church. Hume in his "History of England," chap. 31, referring to Tom Cromwell's Commission, writes:—

"During times of faction, especially of the religious kind, no equity is to be expected from adversaries; and as it was known that the King's intention in this Visitation was to find a pretence for abolishing monasteries, we may naturally conclude that the reports of the Commissioners are very little to be relied on. Friars were encouraged to bring information against their brethren; the slightest evidence was credited; and even the calumnies spread abroad by the friends of the Reformation were regarded as grounds of proof. . . . When it was observed that the rapacity and bribery of the Commissioners and others, employed in visiting the monasteries, intercepted much of the profits arising from these confiscations, it tended much to increase the general discontent. . . . In order to reconcile the people to such mighty innovations, they were told that the King would never thenceforth have occasion to levy taxes, but would be able from the abbey lands alone to bear, during war as well as peace, the whole charges of government. Stories were propagated of the detestable lives of the friars in many of the convents; and great care was taken to defame those whom the Court had determined to ruin."

Is it not a grievous injustice to the Catholic Church and her faithful people that these shameful calumnies, so wickedly contrived and so craftily blended with popular interests and popular prejudice, should be forced upon the High Schools of Ontario for the propagation of the seeds of strife and sectarian bitterness? Does not this injustice towards the Catholic population threaten to overflow upon society at large? Shall not the hatred and contempt of the Catholic religion, engendered by these shocking stories in the school-room, extend quickly to the family, and from the family to factory and store, and thence to every sphere of social life? Is it not enough that the blind anti-Catholic hatred, begotten of Cromwell's Inquisition, has been the cause of permanent internecine war between England and Ireland, resulting in a catalogue of guilt that cries to heaven for vengeance? Is it when all intelligent and good men in England are filled with shame for the Anglo-Irish record of by-gone days, and loudly proclaim the duty of patriotism to forget, and, if possible, undo, the evil work of

their fathers, Canada shall import the decaying weed, the "root of bitterness," (Hebr. 12c. 15,) and plant it, as a flower of sweetness, in her intellectual nursery? In fine, does not justice demand the exclusion of such books from our schools for the sake of the children themselves, Protestant as well as Catholic? It shall not be denied that error is in all cases an injury to the mind, a stain upon the intellect. Prejudice is also an injury to man's moral nature; it distorts the moral sentiment. Errors and prejudices imbibed in youth are with difficulty effaced in mature age. Those derived from school-books are usually indelible; for they are stamped upon the plastic mind with the sanction of parental authority, and by emulous study and repetition and examination are intermixed with the very tissues of life. Text-books are supposed to be chosen judiciously, not alone for the communication of knowledge, but also, and much more, for the formation of taste and the direction of nascent thought. Why should not the intellectual type be free from error and undefiled by prejudice? We confidently leave this most grave question to all good Protestant parents for calm reflection in the interest of their beloved offspring, who shall be the life of society in the next generation. If the fountains be poisoned, how shall society maintain a healthy existence?

Where are we now?

We are happy, dear Rev'd Fathers, to observe that the storm which seemed to threaten us a few weeks ago has gradually subsided into calm. The *Torontine Æolus* has, it would seem, returned to his cave for a season, having failed to create any serious disturbance in the temper of society by his angry blasts against the Catholic Hierarchy. At all events, the right of Bishops to expostulate with the Minister of Education for the protection of religion against school-books "offensive" to Catholic feeling and dangerous to our children's innocence, is no longer denounced as a claim of "dictatorship" over the Provincial Cabinet. The Catholic principle is now more thoroughly understood and its reasonableness more freely confessed. Thus far, let us thank God, the controversy that was so noisily forced upon us, has been productive of good. The issue has, moreover, been officially decided by the following order of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council last Saturday:—

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Order in Council of the 31st March last, Goldsmith's "*Traveller*" or "*Marmion*" may be used by any pupil in the High School or candidate at the departmental examinations in July next, as the parent or guardian may select."

It rejoices Us to state, for the honor of Our Episcopal City, that, prior to this option being given, the young ladies, both Catholic and Protestant, of Kingston (under direction, we presume, of their parents) formally declared against "*Marmion*" as a text-book. The following statement has been communicated to Us by two of those young ladies in reply to Our interrogations:—"The direction having been given to the female pupils of the High School, that all who were in favor of "*Marmion*" should declare their wish by *standing*, the minority, consisting of those only who are studying the Matriculation course and are accordingly under necessity of using that book, stood up, the majority remaining in their seats. Among the latter were all the Catholic pupils of the school. One of these was subsequently called aside and asked 'Had she any personal objection to the book?' Whereupon she replied, as became a well-instructed and self-respecting Catholic, that she had no opinion on the matter, since the question had been decided by the bishops, to whose judgment, as superior to hers, she submitted." May God bless this young lady and her companions, Catholic and Protestant alike! A high religious principle—the very same whose denial gave occasion to the whole controversy—has been affirmed by Our Catholic pupils unhesitatingly and spontaneously, without any command or suggestion from Us. For this we give thanks to God and beseech Him to reward the faith and virtue of those who have openly confessed His Name and authority in His Holy Church.

One word more and We have done. It did appear not unreasonable, when violent attacks were made from day to day against the divine rights of the Episcopate in a journal reputed to be the organ of the great and respectable Conservative party in the Province, that men should hold the party itself more or less responsible for those exhibitions of hostility to Catholic interests. We are happy to have learned, as well from the current sentiment of the Press as from communications, directly or indirectly, made to Us by persons of position and influence, that the course pursued by the Torontine journal has been regarded by Conservatives generally as a mistake, a grievous error, and that the writer neither represented their views nor shared their sympathies. We believe this to be in

great measure true, especially with reference to the leaders of opinion among the party. And We declare Our belief the more readily, because Our just indignation against that unwarranted aggression might otherwise be construed into a condemnation of a great political body. We repeat, We know no party save Our Catholic flock. We are not fettered by favors from either Liberal or Conservative Ministers; We owe no hostility to either section. We stand upon Our right. Our firm basis is the Constitution, guaranteeing liberty of religion to every citizen in this free Dominion. We place Our supreme trust in God, who has pledged His word to sustain His Church "all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. 28c.)

For the rest, dear Revd. Fathers, let us follow the Apostolic rule "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men." (Rom. 12 c., 18.) If some be found to breathe hatred against us, let us pray to God for them, that He may infuse into their hearts His spirit of charity and goodness. This is the precept of Our Blessed Lord, "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." (Matt. 5 c., 44). Let us also fulfil the injunction given by St. Paul to the Bishop of Ephesus, to pray for Our rulers, on the wisdom of whose councils depends the peace and happiness of society, and the advancement of religion and growth of Christian virtue. "I desire, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men; for kings and all who are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, Our Saviour, who wishes all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1st Tim. 2c.)

Entreating your special suffrages in Our Own behalf, and praying God's blessing on you and your faithful congregations,

We remain, dear Rev. Fathers,

Your devoted servant in Christ,

†JAMES VINCENT CLEARY, S.T.D.,

Bishop of Kingston.

By His Lordship's Command,

THOMAS KELLY, Secretary.

Bishop's Palace, Kingston, 17th November, 1882.

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